

stutter

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Hatate returns home from work, and somehow ends up with a very red face a little while after.

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Chapter 1

It's a long day at work, but Hatate's finally able to return home (or as home as her home can get) and relax like she deserves. At least, she thinks so. Honestly, for all the arranging and assisting and arraying she does, she never gets any credit. *'It's always that damned reporter, '* she thinks, her expression set into a scowl as she wraps herself in blankets. *'Just because I'm only the assistant and you're the one presenting everything doesn't mean that you're the one who gets all the applause and thank-yous and you're-so-awesomes. Christ. '*

The door creaks open. Hatate doesn't bother looking over at who enters - only two people live in this particular unit, and Hatate is one of them. The other inhabitant is someone she sorely wishes she doesn't work for. "I'm home... ah, Hatate, you're here already!"

'Yes, so I can spare myself from your infuriating face as much as possible, ' she thinks to herself, still half-buried under soft lavender sheets, though she does admit that Aya's face is about as adorable as it is infuriating. Which makes no sense. The brunette stops thinking along those lines. "Welcome back."

"You worked hard today, didn't you?" A chuckle. Then there's the shuffling of papers, and a dull sound as Aya's bag is placed atop her desk. "Thanks for all your help again. Can't do anything without you. My office would probably go to hell if you aren't so good at organizing things."

Hatate pretends the comment doesn't make her heart flutter, if ever so slightly. She deigns to sit up, glaring daggers at Aya's back. *'Stupid blouse. Stupid skirt. Stupid fluffy hair. Stupid cute token hat with the fucking fluffballs. Stupid... is she undressing? '*

She ducks back down into the shelter of her blankets, panics internally, then straightens once more and gets off the bed. Her gaze

is pointedly averted from the reporter. "I... I'm going to shower. Don't walk in."

"Ah!" Aya suddenly turns around and -- good gracious, Hatate can see her bra from here, and the brunette feels like her eyes are burning within her face. "Can you help me a little? My tie got stuck..."

"I'm sure you can... get it loose... on your own," the brunette chokes out through flushed cheeks and tightly-closed eyes (why does she want to open them?). She makes her way towards the bathroom by memory, arms outstretched to feel around.

There's a pause, before Aya laughs. "Are you shy? Don't worry, it's not like I'm going to strangle you with my tits. Anyway, I'm pretty sure you're straight. Help a girl out, would'ja?"

She's pretty sure she's going to fall over by this point. *Jab*. Ow, had that been the edge of her table? She's pretty sure she's going to have a bruise there in the morning. *Crack*. Had she broken her little toe with that, too? It sure felt like it. "Sorry. I, uh, need to... really... take a bath. I... fell on the way here." *Thud*. Make that three, now. Wait, had Aya just asked if the brunette is straight? She almost laughs, but then the reporter might have to get her medicine.

Another laugh, this one more of a giggle than anything. "Really? You sure do sound like you're getting hit worse than you fell. I'll help you with your bruises if you help me with my tie?"

Oh, for God's sake. Hatate peeks out of one eye, just enough to see where she's going, and totters over to the edge of Aya's bed, where the reporter sits, blouse unbuttoned and tie looking like it had gotten out of a washing machine the wrong way. '*Jesus, if this gets any further...*' "What-What-What's the matter, anyway?" '*Fucking stammer...*'

Aya smiles sheepishly, almost shyly. "I tried removing, but that didn't work, so I thought it had gotten tangled up with one of the buttons,

but clearly not. So, um..."

The brunette doesn't even know how one manages to tangle up a tie they had been able to fix expertly before, but Hatate doesn't even care anymore. *'Now I just seriously want a bath. Like, is this my reward for working twenty-four-seven? Undressing my boss?'* "U-Uh, then, let me just..." She awkwardly takes hold of the tie, skin brushing against skin. Now she's just delighted that the idiot reporter hadn't thought of removing her blouse somehow.

She fumbles awkwardly with the tie, tightening it and loosening it to slowly get it off Aya's neck, and finally, after a horrifically long amount of time, the black tie comes off. Hatate takes the risk and looks back up at Aya's face -- she had been pointedly staring at the opposite direction the entire time.

The brunette is a little more than surprised at what she sees -- Aya's not asleep or anything, but she is gazing at the brunette's brown eyes with her own crimson ones. If Hatate is more poetic, she'd describe the reporter's eyes as endless, eternal, everlasting, whatever, but she's pretty much stunned speechless. *'It's not fair. Why do I have to hate her so much and then she's actually kind of really, really cute?'*

"Hi," Aya says, like an idiot, as usual. Hatate forces down a smile and steps away, gaze back down to the ground again. "Ah -- Hatate?"

The brunette looks back up, just slightly. Her eyes catch sight of the barely-visible black bra Aya wears under her blouse, and she quickly looks away once more. "Wh... What?"

She can just *feel* that Goddamned reporter's smile as she murmurs, low enough for the brunette to lean in. "You're really... well, you prob'ly know this, but you're pretty cute."

"So are you," Hatate mutters before she can stop herself. She pauses, glances up at the reporter with a horrified expression, and

dashes into the bathroom like her hair is on fire.

Aya's laugh echoes. The brunette sinks into the floor, face burning.
